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Amendments to the Specification:

This listing of marked up paragraphs from within the specification will replace all prior versions, of those paragraphs in the application.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 1, line 9 with the following amended paragraph:

An air bag adapted to be deployed into a passenger compartment of a vehicle by a gas supplied from an inflator at the time of collision of the vehicle is provided with a vent hole, and when an internal pressure of the inflating air bag increases as a result of restraining an occupant, the gas so supplied is then ~~releases~~released through the vent hole so as to decrease the tension of a base fabric of the air bag, whereby not only is the occupant restrained gently but also the breakage of the base fabric is prevented.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 1, line 19 with the following amended paragraph:

In the event that the vent hole is constituted by a simple hole opened in the base fabric, since the gas leaks from the vent hole in a process where the air bag is inflated by the gas supplied from the inflator, there is ~~caused~~ a possibility that the deployment of the air bag ~~is~~will be delayed. ~~Then, in an air bag system described in the following patent literature, the leakage of gas in the deployment stage is prevented by sealing a vent hole with a sealing member, and when an internal pressure of the inflating air bag increases as a result of restraining an occupant, a brittle area formed on the sealing member breaks so as to allow for the leakage of the gas.~~

~~[Patent Literature]~~

Please delete the paragraph beginning at page 2, line 7as follows:

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~~JP-T 2000 515090 (the term "JP-T" as used herein means a published Japanese translation of a PCT patent application)~~

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 2, line 10 with the following amended paragraph:

In the Japanese translation of the PCT patent application, JP-T-2000-515090 (the term "JP-T" as used herein means a published Japanese translation of a PCT patent application), an air bag system is described where the leakage of gas in the deployment stage is prevented by sealing a vent hole with a sealing member. When an internal pressure of the inflating air bag increases as a result of restraining an occupant, a brittle area formed on the sealing member breaks so as to allow for the leakage of the gas. In this
~~With the aforesaid conventional air bag system, however, since the special sealing member is needed to close the vent hole in the air bag, there is caused a problem that the numbers of components and man hours for processing are increased by an extent to which the sealing member is added, causing an increase in the production costs, the~~
increased number of components and the increased number of man-hours required in processing the air bag system cause the problem of increased production costs.

The remaining paragraphs include the deletion of ". . ." which occurred throughout the specification.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 6, line 12 with the following amended paragraph:

As shown in Figs. 2 and 3, the steering wheel 12 includes a boss portion 16 fixed to a rear end of a steering shaft 14 with a nut 15, a front cover 17 fixed to the boss portion 16, a rear cover 19 fixed to an inner side of the front cover 17 at a rear end thereof with bolts 18---, a plurality of spoke portions 20--- extending radially from the front cover 17 and a steering wheel main body portion 21 which continues from radially outward

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ends of the spoke portions 20~~---~~ and extends circumferentially. A retainer 22 is fastened to an inner circumferential surface of the rear cover 19 with the bolts 18~~---~~, and the air bag module 13 is supported on the retainer 22. A thin tearable line 19a (refer to Fig. 2) is formed in an inner surface of the rear cover 19 in such a manner as to be torn when an air bag 32 is inflated.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 7, line 3 with the following amended paragraph:

The air bag module 13 includes an inflator 31 filled with a propelling powder which generates a high-pressure gas when burned, the air bag 32 formed by sewing together pieces of base fabric and a fixing ring 33 to which a base portion of the air bag 32 is fixed. A flange ~~34~~ 31a formed around an outer circumference of the inflator 31 and the fixing ring 33 are superimposed on front and rear sides of the retainer 22, respectively, so as to be fixed thereto with bolts 34~~---~~ and nuts 35~~---~~ which are provided on the fixing ring 33. As this occurs, the base portion of the air bag 32 is held between the rear side of the retainer 22 and the fixing ring 33 so as to be secured in place therebetween.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 7, line 16 with the following amended paragraph:

As shown in Fig. 4, the air bag 32 formed into a circular shape includes a first basic fabric 36 positioned on a rear side (a side facing the occupant) of the air bag 32 and a second base fabric 37 which is overlapped on a front side of the first base fabric 36, and the first and second fabrics 36, 37 are sewn together at a sewing portion 38 situated along outer circumferences of the first and second base fabrics 36, 37. A circular opening 37a which surrounds the inflator 31, two vent holes 37e b, 37e b for releasing part of the gas in a later stage of deployment of the air bag 32, and four bolt holes ~~37b~~ 37cfor

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allowing four bolts 34~~---~~ to pass therethrough, respectively, are formed in a center of the second base fabric 37 which constitutes the base portion of the air bag 32.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 8, line 6 with the following amended paragraph:

A fabric restricting member 39 disposed on an outer surface of the air bag 32 includes a circular fixing portion 40 and four restricting fabrics 41~~---~~ which extend radially from an outer circumference of the fixing portion 40 at intervals of 90°, and the fixing portion 40 is overlapped on an outer surface of the first base fabric 36 which faces the occupant and is sewn thereto at a sewing portion 42. A bolt hole 41a is formed in a distal end of each restricting fabric 41, and the restricting member 39 is fastened to the retainer 22 with the bolts 34~~---~~ which pass through the bolt holes 41a so formed. In addition, a sewing line-like brittle portion 41b is formed at an appropriate position on each restricting fabric 41 in such a manner as to be broken when a tension applied to the restricting fabric 41b reaches or exceeds a predetermined value.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 9, line 7 with the following amended paragraph:

As shown in Figs. 5 and 6, in an earlier stage of deployment of the air bag 32, since an outer circumferential portion of the air bag 32 which is attempting to inflate is restricted by the four restricting fabrics 41~~---~~, the inflation of the air bag 32 in an axial direction thereof (in a direction towards the occupant) is restricted. As a result, the deployment speed of the air bag 32 in the axial direction is decreased, and even if the occupant is situated close to the steering wheel 11, since the restraining force of the air bag 32 is prevented from increasing excessively, the occupant can be restrained gently.

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Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 9, line 19 with the following amended paragraph (amendment has been made to correct an incomplete sentence in addition to the removal of "..."):

In the earlier stage of deployment of the air bag 32, of the four ~~restraining~~restricting fabrics 41~~---~~, the upper two restricting fabrics 41~~---~~ close the two vent holes 37b~~---~~ formed in the second base fabric 37, ~~whereby preventing~~whereby the leakage of gas from ~~these the two vent holes 37b, 37b is prevented, which enables a quick~~ deployment of the air bag 32 ~~being thereby enabled~~.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 10, line 1 with the following amended paragraph:

In a later stage of deployment of the air bag 32, in the event that a tension applied to the restricting fabrics 41~~---~~ exceeds a predetermined value, the brittle portions 41b~~---~~ of the restricting fabrics 41~~---~~ are broken by the tension so applied as shown in Fig. 7, whereby the air bag 32 is released from the restriction and is allowed to inflate to its maximum capacity to thereby exhibit its maximum occupant restraining performance.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 10, line 9 with the following amended paragraph:

Thus, the deployment speed of the air bag 32 in the axial direction is restricted by the function of the restricting fabrics 41~~---~~ in the earlier stage of deployment of the air bag 32, and in the later stage of deployment of the air bag 32, the air bag 32 is allowed to inflate to its maximum capacity, whereby the sufficient restraining performance can be secured while restraining the occupant gently. Then, when the brittle portions 41b~~---~~ of the restricting fabrics 41~~---~~ are broken, the vent holes 37b, 37b which are closed by the two restricting fabrics 41, 41 until then are opened, whereby the gas existing within the air bag 32 whose internal pressure is increased as a result of restraining the occupant is

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discharged from the vent holes 37b, 37b, so that the occupant can be restrained more gently, and the breakage of the first and second base fabrics 36, 37 which would otherwise result due to an excessive tension can be prevented. Moreover, since the vent holes 37b, 37b are closed by making use of the existing restricting fabrics 41~~---~~, there is needed no special member for closing the vent holes 37b, 37b, thereby making it possible to reduce the numbers of components and man-hours for processing.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 11, line 9 with the following amended paragraph:

While, in the first embodiment, the restricting member 39 has the four restricting fabrics 41~~---~~, which extend radially at intervals of 90°, a restricting member 39 according to a second embodiment of the invention has three restricting fabrics 41~~---~~, which extend radially at intervals of 120°. Circular openings 41c~~---~~ are formed in distal ends of the respective restricting fabrics 41~~---~~ in such a manner as to be overlapped each other so as to be fixed to the fixing ring 33, and brittle portions 41b~~---~~ adapted to be broken in association with an increase in tension are formed in the vicinity of the openings 41c~~---~~, respectively. Of the three restricting fabrics 41~~---~~, the upper two restricting fabrics 41, 41 are disposed at positions where the vent holes 37b, 37b in the second base fabric 37 of the air bag 32 which is in a deployment process are closed.